

New York (Ms. VELÁZQUEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to strongly and fervently denounce hate crimes in any form anywhere in America.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, this country has witnessed a shocking rise in hate crimes against Asians and Asian Americans. Between the onset of the pandemic to the end of last year, there have been over 2,800 reported incidents of racism and discrimination against Asian Americans.

In New York City, an Asian woman was waiting in line at a bakery when she was brutally pushed to the ground, hitting her head. On the New York City subway, racial slurs have been uttered toward Asian riders and seniors have been physically attacked. In fact, in 2020, the NYPD reported that 10 percent of all bias attacks were targeted towards Asians. That is a ninefold increase over the incidents probed in 2019.

I am proud to represent New York City's Chinatown on the lower east side of Manhattan and Brooklyn's Chinatown around 8th Avenue in Sunset Park.

On February 12, I joined so many others in welcoming in the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Ox. But this year, a dark undercurrent and collective anxiety around the rise in violence dampened the celebrations.

It goes without saying that my constituents and every one of our constituents ought to be able to go to work, walk to the grocery store, or ride public transportation without fear of a bigoted and even dangerous attack.

Mr. Speaker, this is not who we are as a nation. We do not let xenophobia, racism, and violence run rampant on our streets, in our cities, in our hearts. No. We take pride in our diversity. We understand that what brings us together is far greater than what divides us. And we need to bring justice to all the victims of these heinous crimes.

I am glad that in New York City, our mayor has created the Asian Hate Crime Task Force, and I encourage other cities and localities to take similar action.

We also need a sustained Federal presence to combat and prevent hate crimes. That is why in the past I have introduced legislation to allocate \$50 million in Federal funds to help prevent, track, and prosecute hate crimes and assist victims. I look forward to reintroducing this bill.

I was also proud to cosponsor my colleague, Representative GRACE MENG's, resolution to denounce the anti-Asian sentiment that has occurred since the outbreak of the coronavirus.

Every one of us, everyone, has a responsibility to condemn and speak out against these attacks.

RECOGNIZING LIEUTENANT COMMANDER MICHAEL J. HALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Utah (Mr. MOORE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOORE of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the contributions of Lieutenant Commander Michael J. Hall to his community, country, and the fight against COVID-19.

Service to one's country is rarely convenient, particularly not for a father of four with a thriving orthopedic surgery practice. Yet, in September 2019, Dr. Hall overcame adversity to join the Navy Reserve at the age of 48.

Earlier that year, one of Mike's boys showed interest in joining the Navy. A concerned father, Dr. Hall wanted to speak directly to the recruiter. By the end of the call, he inquired about joining himself.

Just 6 months after his commissioning, Dr. Hall was given 36 hours' notice to voluntarily deploy to hard-hit New York City, wearing the only uniform he had without having even completed his basic officer training.

While many of us were scrambling to buy toilet paper, Dr. Hall fought an unknown virus in a makeshift ICU unit with dozens of intubated patients.

Now a seasoned veteran of this pandemic with a deployment under his belt, Dr. Hall is finally attending his basic officer training. No amount of instruction can teach the qualities that Mike Hall already personifies: honor, courage, and commitment, not when it was convenient, but when it mattered most.

Inspired by his father, Mike's son has now also joined the military, building on a new family vision formed in a makeshift ICU ward during a very dark spring in New York City.

Dr. Hall, I thank you for your service, and Mrs. Hall, I thank you even more for your service. You have made Ogden proud.

RESCUE AMERICANS NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to vote in favor of the American Rescue Plan. This past January marked 1 year since the first case of coronavirus was found in the United States. In my home State of Alabama, nearly 10,000 people have contracted COVID-19 and almost 9,000 have died, and over half a million of the workers have filed for unemployment.

We know that the effects of this pandemic have disproportionately impacted our communities of color and low-income workers, who are more likely to be frontline workers and less likely to be able to afford access to quality healthcare.

Thankfully, because of the leadership of the new Biden administration, we recently witnessed a record drop in COVID cases and hospitalizations in Alabama; and with over 815,000 vaccine doses administered in our State, hope is finally on the horizon.

That said, we have a long way to go before there are enough of the vaccines

available to our communities to be really safe from the virus.

As this pandemic continues, I know Alabama families are struggling to make ends meet.

The time for decisive action is now. I strongly support the American Rescue Plan because it will not only crush the virus, but also help us to get back to schools safely, as well as to provide emergency financial support to struggling families and small businesses.

First, the President's American Rescue Plan will create a national vaccination program that will make sure that underrepresented communities are not left behind. The bill also ramps up testing and contact tracing, increases the supply of critically needed PPE, and makes healthcare more accessible by enhancing the Advanced Premium Tax Credit.

That was so important to so many Americans who could not afford otherwise to purchase quality healthcare coverage. This is critical in a non-Medicaid expansion State like Alabama, where people have fewer available healthcare coverage options.

Secondly, the American Rescue Plan delivers immediate financial relief to working families. This bill would provide critically needed \$1,400 economic assistance checks to individuals so we can help families recover and cover the costs of necessary expenses, like childcare, groceries, rent, utilities, and so much more.

I also fought to ensure that the unemployment insurance was extended and expanded to \$400 a week from \$300 a week. This is so important. When we think about the fierce urgency of now, we know that the unemployment, the Federal pandemic unemployment insurance benefits will actually expire March 14 if we do not act. That is why it is so incredibly important that we here in Congress do our part.

I also worked with my colleagues in the Ways and Means Committee to ensure that the American Rescue Plan includes important provisions for our most vulnerable families. I am proud that the package includes an additional \$7.6 million in childcare funding for the State of Alabama, which will help our frontline and hourly workers, who have been our true heroes in this pandemic.

Furthermore, the package provides over \$10 million for Alabama through a TANF pandemic emergency fund so that families with necessary emergency needs get the essentials that are so necessary for their survival.

I am especially proud this bill will also include lifesaving expansion to child tax credit and earned income tax credit, and I have championed that for many years. In my district alone, 53 percent of the children do not receive the full benefits of this credit because it is not fully refundable. We will make it fully refundable and we will expand it, lifting millions of children out of poverty.